

I would like to begin this afternoon by thanking my colleague Senator Feinstein. Quite literally, if it hadn't been for Dianne, we wouldn't be in this room today to discuss this report. As many of you know, it was at Dianne's and Senator Mack's vision that formed the Senate Cancer Coalition. In addition, it was at Dianne's invitation that the National Cancer Legislative Advisory Committee was formed. Throughout the NCLAC (Nic Lak) Committee process, Senator Feinstein and her staff were consistently involved to ensure that the process moved along smoothly. However, while they stayed involved, they stayed out of the ongoing debates—they kept the process moving without trying to influence the outcome.

In this town, it's not about what you know, but rather, knowing whom to ask. Looking at the distinguished list of the committee that formed this report and reading over the circum vitae of today's witness list, we can all be assured that we have asked the right people about how to coordinate our fight against cancer. I thank our witnesses for all of your work on this report, and for joining us today.

I would also like to note that, while we will hear from five superb witnesses this afternoon, there were many more than these five involved in the creation of this report. The NCLAC had twenty superb members, each of whom deserves a great deal of credit for all of their work. In addition to the twenty committee members, well over 200 other participants invested their time and talent in this report. I know that many of these participants are in the audience this afternoon, and I thank each of you for helping to make this possible.

In addition, I think that everyone who has taken part in putting this report together would join me in congratulating and thanking Rebecca Kirch, the Project Director of the National Cancer Legislation Advisory Committee. In the waning days before the publishing of the report, I think my staff gave poor Rebecca a taste of family vacations with my five kids—*“Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?”* However, she showed extraordinary patience, and now at last... we are there.

With this report published, the task is now with us, as legislators, to bring us home. This hearing represents the first rest stop in what should prove to be the long journey of turning these recommendations into a legislation.

The NCLAC report covers the entire continuum of cancer care— from research and discovery, to prevention and early detection, to treatment and palliative care. In addressing the twelve goals laid out by the report, the committee referenced over a dozen Federal Agencies and dozens of federal programs. Many of these agencies require reform, many need better coordination, and many more need more funds to do their jobs well. While the report does not include any specific dollar amounts, I think that it is safe to say that the total cost of the recommendations would fall under the budget category of “not cheap.”

However, the fact that a journey is long and difficult is no reason not to take it. I look forward to hearing from each of you and to working with Senator Feinstein and other interested members to

bring this report home.

Thank you.